

S I L E N C E
A
Christian's DUTY,
On the DEATH of
Dearest Relations,
From this
CONSIDERATION,
That God has done it.

Being a DISCOURSE on *Psal.* xxxix. 9.
Occasion'd by the Death of a Young Man,
who was a near Relation of the Author.

By JOHN CHAPPELOW, K
Author of, *The Right Way to be Rich.*

2 KINGS IV. xxvi.

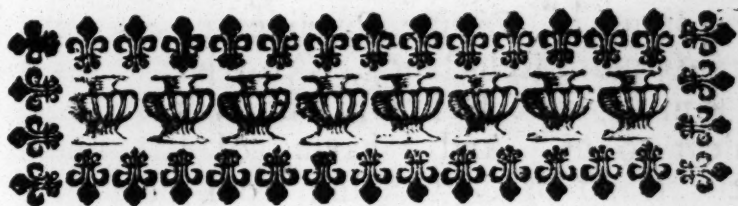
*Now now I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her,
Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy Husband?
Is it well with the Child? And she answer'd, It
is well.*

Printed for the Author, in the Year 1718.



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THE
EPISTLE
TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader, the Goodness of God so many Ways conspicuous and manifested to his People, who are altogether unworthy of the least of his Favours, is a great and just Obligation on them to take all well from him in all the Dispensations of his Providence, yet such is the contrariety in the Heart of the fallen Creature, that the best of Men find it hard enough to comply with the will of a wise and gracious God, when he takes any thing from them which they count dear

to them, and in nothing does the Heart of Man more ordinarily Rise against the Proceedings of Divine Providence, and express more Reluctancy, then when he takes from us some Relation who was near and dear to us. And I having of late found the Hand of God taking from me such a Relation, as I looked on as the only one among them I have, who might be helpful to me, and a stay to me by his known Capacity and Diligence to support me in my aged Years, I found it hard to bear such a Stroke with that becoming Patience and Submission I wou'd, and knew I shou'd have done, and as is the indespensible Duty of every Christian; that therefore on this Occasion I might bring my Mind into a suitable Temper, I set my Thoughts seriously on the Words of the *Psalmist* hereafter consider'd, which I hope I may say, by God's Blessing, has brought my Spirit into much better Order; and seeing we are here in a Pilgrimage State, I hope I may be allowed to help my Fellow-Travellers with what Considerations I have found useful to my self, and I hope also may be some way useful to them in their sorrowful Circumstances; and I hope farther, that no serious and humble Christian will take it ill, that I make this Essay for the Help of my Companions, in our way to another and better World.

When I review the Course of my Life thus far advanc'd, and think how unprofitably

tably I have spent the prime of my Years, in running after the painted Butter-flies of this seducing World, I am ashamed and grieved that so much of my precious Time shou'd be run out to so little and no better Purpose ; and this Consideration sets an Edge on my Spirit, to redeem the Time ; and if I could now, when but a very few Sands are in the Glass, according to the ordinary Course of Nature, do some acceptable Service for God, and the which may be useful to my Fellow-Christians, I hope no good Man will blame me, nor do I know why he shou'd.

There is no Man Living, how firm soever he thinks he stands, but some time or other it will be his own Case, and he will have (or he has already had) Occasion for all the Helps he can meet with to quiet his Heart under the Dispensations of Divine Providence, either on the Account of some departed Relation, or in some other Case, and therefore I am the more willingly engaged in this Undertaking, as being of so general an Use to the Christian.

The small Treatise I have already sent abroad into the World, has been acceptable, and I hope very useful to many good Christians, and I bless God who has made it so, and also for that I did publish it ; for I really think (whatever some nice Christians with curious Palates may think of it) that I never did God nor his Church especially

especially the poor of the Flock; to whose Case it is most especially adapted, and for whom it was chiefly intended) so much Service, as by that my poor, but I hope my honest and hearty Undertaking therein, for the Purposes therein mention'd.

Now may the good God, the Lord of the Harvest, who employs whom he pleases to do his Work, bless these my Meditations to the good of such his afflicted Children, into whose Hands they may come, which that they may be so blessed, is, and shall be the frequent Prayer of,

Candid Reader,

*London, Aug. Thine Unworthy Servant in
27, 1718. our Lord Jesus,*

JOHN CHAPPELOW.
11 JY 63





*On the Brevity and Uncertainty
of Humane Life.*

HOW fickle is the Life of Man !
 Whose longest Date is but a Span !
 A four Inch Space, and then he must,
 Be hurl'd into the silent Dust ;
 So soon as Born, the Infant cryes,
 Oft fetches but a Groan, and Dies ;
 And thus he makes an hasty Flight,
 Is born at Noon, and dies e're Night ;
 Or if he have a longer stay,
 He wastes his Time with Toys and Play,
 And oft before he can discern,
 What 'tis to live, in Childhood dies. 7
 When riper Years commence, and fill
 The Veins with warmer Blood, instill
 Fresh Thoughts into his youthful Breast,
 Oft Death surprizing him Arrests ;
 Nor flowery Youth, nor strength avails,
 When the keen Dart of Death assailes ;
 Nor ties of Nature can detain,
 The Sprightly Youth, all Prayers are vain ;
 Nor

Nor Sighs, nor Tears, nor Baggs of Gold,
 Can the fierce Stroke of Death with-hold;
 When God commands to strike, he must
 The stoutest Mortal send to Dust;
 Death does him in full Strength surprize,
 Like Flowers he grows, like Flowers he dies;
 The Grass that grows in Meads to Day,
 Is cut, and 'twill the next be Hay;
 The sweetest Rose that e're our Eyes
 Beheld, Buds, Blossomes, Fades and Dies,
 So did my Dear, my hopeful Be.
 Who gain'd Love 'mongst all Ranks of Men;
 Whose short-run Race was but a Stride,
 Just peep'd into the World and died.
 Cease then my Soul to grieve in vain,
 And let no murmuring Sigh remain;
 But let thy Will calmly accord,
 With his, who is thy Sovereign Lord.
 No Mortal lives so well as he,
 That lives in chearful Charity;
 That is content with what he meets,
 Let it be bitter, or be sweet;
 That with a pleasant chearful Mind,
 Contents himself with what he finds.
 This Posting-Life with haste drives on,
 And this short Race will soon be run;
 Then blessed Souls shall ever be,
 Happy to all Eternity,
 In those blest Regions above,
 Ever enjoy the God of Love.

SILENCE.



S I L E N C E

A

Christian's DUTY,

On the DEATH of

Dearest Relations, &c.

P S A L M XXXIX. IX.

*I was Dumb, I opened not my Mouth,
because Thou didst it.*

WHatever was the Occasion of the Psalmist *David's* Penning of this Psalm, he Discovers an extraordinary Care and Watchfulness over his own Heart, to guard it against all Impatience under his present Affliction.

The first *Verse* tells us, *He would take Heed to his Ways, that he might not Sin with his Tongue; and that he would keep his Mouth with*

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a Bridle, while the wicked was before him. He well knew the proneness of his own Heart, to vent it self by Expressions, which favoured of Impatience, under God's afflicting Hand, and therefore he took up this pious Resolution, to take Heed to his Ways, lest he sinned with his Tongue, and that he might come up to this, he would keep his Mouth as with a Bridle; or as the Hebrew (as the Marginal Notes tell us) he would keep a Bridle or Muzzle for his Mouth; he would have that in Readiness which should be a continual check to the undue Risings of his own Heart, against the providential Dispensations of an allwise God, and more especially while he was in Company of wicked Men, who are very ready to make hard Reflections on Religion, for any thing they observe amiss in those who profess it; he was well aware of their malignant Temper, which led them either to mock at his Calamity, and thereby increase his Sorrow, or else to reproach Religion for any thing they observ'd to drop from his Lips, which they could artfully construe into Impatience, and therefore he would maintain a strict Regard to Bridle his Tongue, while they were before him.

Verse 2. tells us, That he was dumb with Silence; he was so mute under the Hand of God afflicting him, that he was as a Dumb Man, he had not a Word to say against God's Righteous Proceedings, and, says he,

I held my Peace even from Good; it is like the stroke was so heavy upon him, that it stunn'd and astonish'd him; he was so surpriz'd thereat, that he could not go on so readily and chearfully as he would, in the way of his Duty, of which he makes a fair and honest Acknowledgment, and of his own Infirmary herein, and, says he, *My Sorrow was stirred*, he found his Grief grew upon his Hands, this is all he got by it, his Sorrow increas'd for want of Vent.

My Heart, says he, in *Verse 3.* was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned; he felt himself all in a Flame; his Affections were in a Ferment, while he was musing and poring on his sad Condition, till he broke Silence, and spoke out his Mind to God, he found himself at a Loss, while he mutter'd over the matter in his own Soul, and kept his Case close pent up in his own Breast, and therefore he resolves to unburden himself, and make Application to God by Prayer and Supplication, and then he found Redress; and I doubt not but it is the Christian's Experience to this Day, that his opening himself to God, and it may be also to some faithful, humble, and sympathizing Friend, is of great use to him under his sorrowful Circumstances, and that he finds abundance of Ease thereby, above what he has by sitting in the Dumps, and keeping his Sorrow to himself close lock'd up in his own Breast.

The 4th and 5th *Verses* furnish us with the Matter of his Prayer; *Lord, says he, make me to know mine End, and the Measure of my Days what it is,* and for this Purpose, *that I may know how frail I am;* and so he goes on to describe the frailty and shortness of Life, which he compares to an Hand-breadth, no more than four Inches at most, and so the Life of Man may be fitly compared, as contained in Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and old Age, which are the four Inches of a Man's Life, the Hand-breadth and short Measure of his Days at longest, before which is fully compleat, many flourishing Youths drop into the Grave, beside what are nip'd in the Bud of Childhood, and die in riper Years, as frequent Instances occur to our Observation, and therefore he truly concludes, that every Man at his best State is altogether Vanity, plainly shewing that the best State of a Man, his flow'ry Youth, his Health, Strength, Beauty, nor Activity, or ought else which may seem to promise us a long Stay here in our own Persons, or in the most near and dear Relations, can secure us or them from the inevitable Stroke of Death, but that every Man at his best State, in his most lively Appearance, flourishing Beauty, and fullest strength of Nature, is not only Vanity, but altogether Vanity.

Verse 6. describes unto us the settled Opinion the Psalmist had of the whole Stock of
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designing Men, of Men that were Projecting their own and their Families State and Grandure, and it was this, Surely, says he; *every Man walketh in a vain shew*: He took it for a Maxim he had receiv'd, and would confirm his fellow Believers in the Truth of it, that thus it was, all that the most designing and projecting Man can arrive at, is *But a shew, a Shadow, a vain shew*; has nothing of Reality or Substance in it, and this he observes to be every natural Man's Walk, it is his continued Course; *he walketh in it*; and then again we may observe what he says further, *they are disquieted in Vain*. Sometimes he gives us the singular, sometimes the plural Number, as much as he should say, *one and all, every Man thus Walks, and is thus disquieted in Vain*; *he heaps up Riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them*. He designs what he has, and shall leave of the World for such an one, whom he intends for his Heir; but his Purpose is broken, and the Providence of God substitutes another for whom he never intended it, and this is one way which maketh his Assertion good, *That every Man walketh in a vain shew, and is disquieted in Vain*, in as much as if he succeed in his Attempts (as he often does not) yet he is disappointed many times in the Person he aimed them for, and knows not who he shall be, nor what he shall be, who shall possess the Fruits of his anxious Toyl and Labour.

The 7th Verse acquaints us with the Psalmist's Holy Purpose, *And now Lord what wait I for? my hope is in thee*; as if he had said, seeing Matters are thus, that the Life of Man is so frail, and that he is attended with such, and so many Disappointments in all his Attempts, Lord, I am resolv'd where to fix my Hope and Confidence, even in thee; he well knew that God was a safe Refuge for him to have Recourse to, in all the various Exigencies he did, or could meet with in a fickle and unconstant World.

The 8th Verse contains his Request to God, *To deliver him from all his Transgressions*; and he deprecates *his being made a Reproach of the foolish*; he begs Deliverance from all Sin, both the Filth and Guilt of it, as we may well understand his Prayer to take in both, and for which he so eminently calls up his Soul and all that is within him to bless God on both these Accounts, Psal. 103. 3. *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, who healeth all thy Diseases*. Every true Christian has as well the work of Sanctification, as God's justifying Grace, the Matter of his Prayer and Praise, he would be sanctified as well as justified and pardoned, and equally bless God for the one, as for the other; and at the close of this Verse he deprecates his being a Reproach of the foolish, the scorn and contempt of wicked Men, whom he accounts no better than Fools, whatever Success they may have

have in their Worldly projects, and how-
 wise or cunning soever they may be account-
 ed to hoard up Riches, yet they are all
 Fools in his way of reckoning, in as much
 as they neglect the true Riches, the light of
 God's Countenance, which has so many great
 Blessings going along with it, as he justly
 prefers it above all the Confluence of World-
 ly Enjoyments, *Psal. 4. 6, 7.* and he here
 deprecates being made a Reproach of those
 Men as looking upon it to be a sore Affliction
 to a good Man, to be the Scorn and Deri-
 sion of *Fools*, and thus come in the words
 of the Text. *In v. 9. I was dumb, I opened
 not my Mouth, because thou didst it.*

In the Words we have these Parts.

1. The Psalmist's Behaviour, *I was
 Dumb, I opened not my Mouth*, both being
 of like Import, to shew the Steadiness of
 this quiet Composure in him, he was as a
 dumb Man, one that opened not his Mouth,
 had nor a Word to say against the proceed-
 ings of God in his Righteous Providence.

2. Here is the Reason of this, his quiet
 and submissive Carriage, *because thou didst
 it, i. e.* what ever secondary Causes might
 contribute to issue Matters, as they now are
 with me, yet I firmly believe thy Hand guid-
 ed every Spoke in the Wheel, thy Wisdom
 and Power over-ruled all secondary Causes,
 to fulfill thy own purpose, and this quieted
 my Heart under my present Affliction, in as
 much as thou didst it.

3. Here

3. Here is the Matter of the Psalmist's Trouble obscurely hinted at, in this little Particle, *it, Thou didst it*. What ever he hereby intended, it was what he knew God had ordered to him; and reckons he had done it, and this quieted him under it, he prudently overlook'd all inferiour Causes, and fixes the Issue of them all on God as a free and powerful Agent.

If we observe the Contexture of this Psalm, wherein the Psalmist *David* so often takes Notice of the Frailty and Brevity of the Life of Man, both in several Verses before the Text, and in some after it; we may be inclined to think that the Psalm was penned on the occasion of the Death of some of his near and dear Relations or Acquaintance, for whom he had a particular regard, and by which Providence he reckoned himself greatly afflicted; no particular mention is made hereof, so that we are somewhat at a loss to know the true and just Occasion thereof; but the matter of the Psalm, and the phrase thereof, do incline me (with submission) to think what I have already mentioned to be the occasion of his Penning this Psalm; and in the prosecution of the Text, I shall more particularly have regard thereto as such, but yet withall taking in the several other various Cases of a Christian's Affliction governed and ordered unto him by the Conduct of Divine Providence.

The Proposition that I shall take up from the Words of the Text, as before consider'd, shall be this.

Doct. That it is the Duty of a Christian quietly to submit to God in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards him.

God is a Sovereign Majesty, and as such he acts towards us, and as such we ought to acquiesce in his Dispensations towards us, and though this be our indispensable Duty, and we are ready to acknowledge it so to be, yet we find it hard, very hard to bring our Hearts to a chearful compliance therewith; I shall therefore endeavour, as God shall help me, to shew what a great Concern we are to have in this Matter, and say something more especially to the quieting our Minds under God's bereaving Providence, when he strips us of some near Relation, for whom we have had a particular Regard, but yet as I said before, will endeavour to manage the Discourse so as to respect other Cases. The Method I shall take in prosecuting of the point of Doctrine laid down is this.

1. To shew what it is for a Christian quietly to submit to God under all the Dispensations of his Providence towards him.

2. How this appears to be so much the Duty of a Christian.

3. Why it is so.

4. Somewhat by way of Inference.

1. What it is for a Christian to submit, &c.

1. Negatively.

2. Posi.

2. Positively.

1. Negatively what it is not.

1. It is not a stupid and insensible Frame of Spirit under God's Afflicting Hand, God allows us our sence of his Stroke, when he Chastens us, he would have us to regard his Correction; as we are to Rejoyce in his Favours, so we are to consider his Frowns, *Eccles. 7. 14. in a Day of Prosperity be joyful, but in Adversity consider.* When the Hand of God goes out against us, we are to take Notice thereof, and have a moderate Concern of Sorrow therein; a tender Father expects his Correction, which ever flows from Love, should be notic'd, and laid to Heart; and so it is by every ingenuous Child. O says the poor Child, there is some great Cause why my dear Father, who bears so much Love to me, should thus strike me, I know it is not for nothing that he thus deals with me: So here, we should be sensible of God's Corrections, and think we have put him upon thus dealing by us, How shall we else answer the End of God in Afflicting us: If we be stupid and insensible under his Hand, we are far from *Dauids* Frame, he was indeed Mute and Dumb under God's Hand, but yet he retain'd a lively sence of his Affliction. He had a regard to God who order'd and govern'd it, as he was sensible of the Rod, so also of the Hand that mov'd it.

2. As this quiet submission to the Hand of God, is not a stupid and senceless Frame,

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so much less is it a Stubborn and Stout Frame of Spirit, that will not acknowledge the Hand of God in his Providence, but thinks to brave it out against the Stroke of God, and bear up against his Hand, with a Surly and Stout unconcernedness, that sets the Sinner boldly to contemn and despise the Correction of God, while he deals sparingly, and suspends those terrible Judgments which he lets fall upon other Sinners of the same Rank with themselves; and he must have arrived at a great pitch of Wickedness, who thus carries it towards God under Affliction; there is such a wretched Temper of Soul in the fallen Creature, and therefore we have the Advice given by the wise Solomon, *Prov. 3. 11. my Son despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be thou weary of his Correction.* When the Sinner carries it thus Stubbornly under God's Hand, he Acts the part of *Pharoah*, who bore it up a long while against the visible Judgments of God, but was forc'd to yield at last, notwithstanding all his Stoutness; for God will have the Day, of all his Enemies, who are but as Potsherds of Clay before him.

3. Neither was he so Dumb, as he had nothing to say to God by Prayer and Supplication, for we find he puts up several Petitions to God in this Psalm, as v. 4. *Lord make me to know mine End, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.* and v. 8. *deliver me from all my transgressions,*

gressions, make me not the reproach of the foolish.
 And v. 10. *Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand,* and so further, v. 12, 13. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry, &c.* Here we find him so far from being Dumb in the Duty of Prayer, that he lifts up his Voice with a Cry. So that the Psalmist's Dumbness, did not consist in his refraining from the Duty of Prayer, for he is very hearty and earnest in his Addresses to him as the God of his Help and Salvation.

2. But *Secondly*, Positively, What this is to submit quietly to God in the Dispensations of his Providence.

1. There is in it a watchful Frame of Spirit, over our selves, lest we offend by any Expression or Act of Impatience under God's afflicting Hand, this was *David's* Care, v. 1. of this Psalm.

I said, I will take heed unto my ways, that I sin not with my Tongue; he was resolved to set a Guard over his Ways and over his Words too; thus my Brethren should we do, we are prone, very prone naturally, to fret and fume under God's Afflicting Hand, and therefore we have the more need to set the stronger Guard to prevent it, and we shall never arrive at this quiet frame of Spirit without a due regard to this Duty.

2. It is a resigned Temper of Soul, in giving up what we have, and what we are to the Will of a Sovereign God: We are apt to dote upon

upon our Enjoyments, to be fond of our Creature Comforts, now God, to let us see the Vanity of them, he calls for that at our Hands that we over-valued, and thus he takes away a loving Husband, a dear Wife, a beloved Child, or other Relation, on whom we either had some dependance or valued as the Comfort of our Lives, and hereby our love to Christ Jesus is abated, we over-value Relations, and under-value the Lord Jesus, now the Father will not bear it, to see his Son flighted, and a poor, sorry, fading Creature preferred above him, and therefore this Gourd must wither and dye; now how do we bear such a Stroke of Divine Providence? If we acquiesce calmly in the good Pleasure of God, and can say as *Job Ch. 1. 21. the Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord*; this is to be found in this great and honourable Duty we are speaking of.

3. There is in this Submission to God in all the Dispensations of his Providence, a Religious regard to the Faithfulness of God in his Promise, whereby he has obliged himself to work out good to his People by the darkest Providences they are under, *Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are so called according to his purpose*; the Apostle knew this, that they wrought together, and so he says, *Ch. 5. 3, 4. 5. we glory in tribulations also*, this seems very strange

one wou'd think it so, that the poor distressed
 Saints should Glory in such a degree of
 Trouble, as might bear the Name of Tribu-
 lation; and yet so it was, and he gives us
 the Reason of this their Glorifying herein,
 and that we have in the very next Words,
 to prevent our Amusement, *knowing that tri-
 bulation worketh patience, and patience, experi-
 ence, and experience hope, and hope maketh not
 ashamed*; so that, as the Apostle says in the
 forecited place, they all work together for
 good. Just as you see the Motion of a cu-
 rious Watch, the Spring puts the main
 Wheel a going, and that another, and so
 on, that they all work together, to answer
 the design of the Artist who made it, and
 the expectation of him that keeps it; even
 so do the Providences of God, all his Dis-
 pensations have this in them, tho' we are
 hard put to it many Times to think so. The
 Merchant can easily believe, that when all
 his Adventures come safe Home with great
 Advantage, that this is for his good, and
 if he has any regard to God who go-
 verns the Winds and Waves, and has sent
 all his Effects safe Home, through many
 Stormy Blasts, and dark Winter Nights; he
 can not only believe that this shall be for his
 good, but he sees Cause to bless God for
 his favourable Providence: But if the same
 Man suffer a considerable Loss at Sea, the
 Ship and Goods lost, and it may be a dear
 Son buried with them in the Ocean, this he

taken

takes as a very hard Stroke, and he can not see how all this Loss can be tutor'd by the Divine Hand, so as to be any way for his good; but yet such a dark Providence as this, is govern'd by a Wise God for good, to such as love him. Or, a Person may be a Tradesman, a great Dealer in the World, and when he has a quick Trade, many good Orders from safe Hands, and his Shop and Ware-house well fill'd with fresh and valuable Goods, to answer these Demands from him, he can easily believe that these things make for his good, but when Trade runs low, and divers Chapmen break upon his Hands for considerable Sums, he concludes all these things are against him, neither can he see how it should be otherwise; but yet God has a Gracious design in such a Dispensation as this, and will make it work together for good to such as love him; whether they can see it or no. Again, a Man may be a Country-man, an owner, or a considerable Farmer, and if he have a fair Prospect of a Plentiful Crop, and things succeed according to his expectation, and he have a favourable Season for bringing in all this Plenty safe into his Barns; and besides, have his Herds thriving, his Oxen strong to Labour, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal.* 144. 14. his Flocks growing and increasing, he can easily believe these things to be for his good; but if his hopeful Crop be surprized by a Storm of Hail which batters it down to the Ground, or a con-

tinued Rain threatens to spoyl all his Cost and Labour, and his Herd of Cattle drop down one after another by some Pestilential Disease got among them; his Sheep are worried with Dogs, or take the Rot which carries off most of them; these Disappointments are heavy upon him, and he must *live a Life of Faith*, that can see these things working for his good. Again, if a Person have an agreeable Yoke-fellow, a Husband, or Wife, a Stock of pretty, towardly and hopeful Children, such an one thinks them great Blessings, and can own them so to God, if he have any regard to his Duty; but when he comes to snatch away the Husband from the Wife, or the Wife from the Husband, and either of them are left to tugg hard to support their poor Children, or if they be continued together, and their tender and dear Children drop one after another, these Strokes are heavy upon them, and they cannot see how they shou'd work for their good, and yet the Wise, Powerful and Gracious Providence of God, can and does over-rule these sad Circumstances for good to those that love him. Thus also it is in a Case more nearly relating to the Soul, when a poor Believer has the light of God's Countenance shining upon him, while he lives in the Sun-shine, in a sensible Enjoyment of God, in whose Presence is Life; and when he can take a view of what Christ Jesus has undertaken for him, , and fully accomplished in his behalf, when he sees him in his Incar-

nation, Death, Resurrection, Assension, and sitting at the Right-Hand of the Father in Heaven as his Suerty, his Mediator, his Fore-runner, who is for him entered into Heaven, there to Intercede for him, and prepare a Place, a Mansion of Glory for him, that where Christ is, there he may be also; these he concludes are all great Things, and he can easily conclude that Christ has in all these, wrought out abundance of good for him: But when the Lord suspends the light of his Countenance, hides his Face, and he cannot see him, as *Job* speaks, Ch. 23. 8, 9.

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. In such a Case a poor Believer is in great Distress, this good Man *Job* was so, and therefore he complains that then *his Complaint was bitter, and that his Stroke was heavier than his Groaning*, as if there were more Sorrow in his Case than his Groans could express, and heartily wishes that he knew where he might find his God, whose Presence he so much wanted, and longed for, v. 2, 3. when a poor Believer can not make out his Title to, and Interest in the great undertakings of Christ Jesus, Oh then he is quite down in his Spirit, and ready to take up dark Conclusions against himself, he is then ready to say with the poor disconsolate Church, *Isa. 49. 14. The Lord hath forsaken*

me, and my Lord hath forgotten me, when no such thing can be, of which the Lord gives the greatest Assurance, v. 15. 16. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb, yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee, behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me; a Woman can hardly forget her own Child, more especially she will not forget her sucking Child, yet such provocations, so many, and so great may be, as the Mother may forget her own dear sucking Child, which she nursed up with so much Care and Tenderness, and says God, tho' this may be, yet will not I forget thee, I have graven thee upon the palms of my Hands; so that he cannot look on his Hands, but he sees their Names there inscribed; and all this to assure the poor disconsolate Soul of his Care and Concern for him, and the gracious Lord, all the while of his hiding himself, has Thoughts and Designs of Mercy towards the poor clouded Believer, tho' he cannot think it.

God to humble us, and let us see our own Weakness, and that we should have a more full Dependance on him, as the Spring of all our Spiritual Life, Light and Comfort, may withdraw himself, that we may value him more. Thus the Spouse was left by her beloved Lord; he had withdrawn himself and was gone, and she poor Heart, thought she shou'd never find him more,
when

when no such Matter, his Heart beat; and his Bowels yearned towards her all this while, and he waited for an opportunity to discover himself towards her, and to make way for this, he *puts in his Finger by the hole of the Door, and then her Bowels were moved for him*, and then presently she has him in her Arms, *and held him, and would not let him go*, all the desigh of her Beloved's leaving her, was to Correct her Sloth, her unconcernedness for her Beloved, and to enflame her affections after him, and can we say other than that this was for her good? and so she found it, and wou'd we reckon on it, aforehand, that the issue of such a Dispensation of God towards us would be for our good, we should more readily aquiesce in the Will of God concerning us herein, as a Correction of our Sloth, or a Tryal of our Faith and Love, either of which Ends God may have upon us in his hiding his Face from us but yet as we have in the example of *Job*, newly instanced in, we should be very earnest in our Enquiries after him.

4, The Soul that submits to the Will of God in all the Dispensations of his Providence, is very frequent and very earnest with God to obtain this good Temper of Mind, and to maintain it. That wicked King of *Israel*, was far from this, who cries out, *2 Kings 6. 33. This evil is of the Lord, what should I wait any longer?* But this is nothing like the Spirit of a humble Christian.

ian. Wicked Men grow furly under their Straits, and behave themselves accordingly, but a Gracious Soul is afraid to offend, by any Act of Impatience, and therefore makes his Address to the Throne of Grace which God has erected, *That he may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in this his Time of Need*, as believing that God has provided that Throne on purpose to dispence Grace from thence to answer all his Occasions, in such his Times of Need.

2. I proposed to shew, how it appears to be so great a Duty of a Christian, thus to carry and behave himself.

1. This appears from the Contents of God's Word which reveals it, and commands it; and so the Apostle *James* says, Ch. 4. 7. *Submit your selves therefore unto God*; and how is this? even in all the Dispensations of his afflicting Providence. This is our indispensible Duty, to comply with the Will of our Heavenly Father, and quietly to acquiesce therein, and to say with good *Hezekiah*, when he had received a Sharp Message from God, concerning his House, by the hand of *Isaiah*, 2 Kings 20. 19. *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.*

2. This appears to be the Christians Duty, from the Example of great an good Men left us; whose Faith, Patience and Pattern of Holyness we ought to follow, and especially the great Example of our Lord *Jesus*, who when he met with the greatest Sorrow

Sorrow that ever Man did, and under which the most lofty Angel would have sunk, yet he quietly resigns his will to the Will of his Father, when his Soul was exceeding Sorrowful unto Death, and he had the Fathers Wrath upon him, as standing in the place and Room of guilty Sinners, for whom he was to satisfy Divine Justice to the utmost Earthing; for *on him was laid the Iniquity of us all, Isa. 53. 6.* Yet how calmly and cheerfully does he acquiesce in his Fathers Will, *Mark 14. 36. Abba Father, all Things are possible unto thee, take away this Cup from me, nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.* It would have been an easy Request for the Father to have granted, yea Justice to have granted it, if he had stood in his own Stead, but as he stood in the place of his guilty Members, for whom he had undertaken, and in whose behalf he was to satisfy; God the Father saw his Death and Passion so necessary, that it was impossible that *Cup should pass from him,* and so he takes it at his Fathers Hand, and drinks it up to the bottom. We know how holy Job carried it, when his Flocks, his Herds, his Children and all else in the World dear to him were gone; nothing left but a Froward, Peevish and Tempting Wife, as most generally she is taken to be; yet he expresses himself, not only content with what God had done, but he blesses his Name for taking away, as well as for giving. *The Lord*
gave,

gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord, Ch. 1. 21. O how may this shame us out of our quarrelling with God under our Uneasiness when he takes any desirable Relation from us, how hard are we brought to comply with the good Will of a Wise God in such a Case, or other of like Nature.

3. It appears to be so, from the good Fruit which redounds to the Soul thereby, and you know we are naturally fond of what makes for our Gain; it is so in Temporal Things, and why should it not be so in Spirituals? Now there is a Fruit, an Advantage accrues to the Soul of a Believer by this his Submission to the Will of God, and this is *the quiet and peaceable Fruit of Righteousness, Heb. 12. 11.* and the Fruits that flow in upon the Soul thereby, are such as these which follow.

1. Hereby the Believer gains a suitable Frame to keep up his Communion with God, this he can by no means do, while he frets under his afflicting Hand, and is in a ruffled Temper of Soul, while he is so, he is under that Disorder of Mind, which renders him very unfit for Meditation, and conversing with God; but when he can quietly acquiesce in the Will of God taking from him that which was, and it may be too much in his Esteem, then he can with the greater Advantage, maintain his Communion with God, which is a great means of his Spiritual Growth and Fruitfulness. 2.

2. Hereby the poor afflicted Believer comes to suck sweetness out of the Promise. The Promises of God are as full Breasts to be drawn by a Believer in his fainting Fits, but this he cannot do when he separates the Hand that Afflicts him in Divine Providence, from the Hand that supports in the Promise; when he muses and pores only on the dark side of his Case, when he only looks on the dark side of the Cloud, but there is a bright side as well as there is a dark side, there is a *Bow in the Cloud*, and when the Soul can view this, can see the Promise, and the Comfort wrapt up in it to be his, this is a singular Advantage to help him in his Case be it what it will, and our quiet and composed Thoughts under Gods Hand is a great help to us to arrive at this great Priviledge.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to see the evil Consequence of Sin, particularly of our over-valuing the Creature, and our too great expectation from it; when we submit calmly to the will of God, this we can do, we can see his correcting Hand and justify his Proceedings against us, when he removes such a Relation, such a Child or other Relative, on whom we doted, and we see his Hand moving the Rod, we can more readily acknowledge our own Sin which put him upon this way of Correction, and so see the evil tendency of Sin, and our own Cause of Humiliation an that account.

4. By

4. By our quiet resigning Mind to the will of God Afflicting us, we answer somewhat of the End of God in such his dealings towards us. God has many Gracious Ends in Correcting his Children, he takes no more Pleasure in the Correction it self, than you who best love your Children, take in correcting yours, but he does it out of their Necessity, and so *they are for a Season in Heaviness through manifold Temptations*, but it is always *when there is need thereof*, 1 Pet. i. 6. God sees there is a need to purge away their Sin, to purge away their Pride, their Worldliness, their Sensuality, their Formality and many other Sins, and therefore he knocks down their Props that they have set up for themselves in the Creature, that they may rest more fully on himself, and so we have the End of God to be this, the purging away the Iniquity of Jacob by his Affliction, *Isa. 27. 9. by this therefore shall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the Fruit, to take away his Sin.* The poor Believer often harbours hard Thoughts of such an Affliction as he meets with, and thinks it will make much for his Hurt, when no such matter, what God intends him thereby, is, to purge away his Sin, to whiten him, and refine him, and make him more meet for his Service here, and more meet to be partaker of the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, to be a Companion for Saints in Glory; and all the Proceedings of God to-
wards

wards him in thus Correcting of him, are a great Blessing and Advantage to him, what ever he for the present may think thereof, in as much as God hereby brings about his gracious ends upon him.

And here it may not be amiss to mention some of the good Ends of God, in afflicting his own dear Children.

1. Hereby the Believer comes to know not only the evil Tendency of Sin in general, as aforesaid, but also many times the particular Sin for which God corrects, is plainly intimated, and thereby the hatred of that and all other Sin is increased, for if our hatred against Sin be genuine, it is such as exerts it self against *all Sin*, not only against the sin for which we are convinc'd we suffer, but against all sin, and that as it is against the holy Law, and against the Honour of a gracious and good God, and as it cost Christ Jesus our great Mediator so much as it has done in becoming an attoning Sacrifice for it, to become thereby our Peace-maker, and take up the matter betwixt an offended righteous, and just God, and us guilty and miserable Sinners: Now to have a sight of that sin for which God corrects us, and our hatred against that and all other sin thereby increased, is one of the good Ends of God in correcting of us, this was what good *Job* prayed for under his sore Afflictions, *Lord,* says he, *Chap. 13. 23. make me to know my Transgressions and my Sin.* He desir'd to know

both what to do, and what not to do, to know for what particular Evil it was that God so contended with him, and his hand was so heavy upon him, he was sure it was not for nothing, that a gracious, kind God, dealt after such an uncommon Manner with him, as to single him out as a Dear for the Chase, and make him a Mark for his Arrows one after another; and if holy *Job*, who was such a considerable Servant of God, and of whose Integrity and close walking God makes an open Acknowledgment to that busy Adversary the Devil, as it were to upbraid him therewith; if, I say, this great and good Man made it his Errand to God, *To teach him his Transgressions and his Sin*, how much more should we do so, who come so far short of his Attainments? His Example in asking this of God, teaches us the Benefit of such a Discovery, and our Duty to engage our Hearts in our Requests for this Mercy. When *Joseph's* Brethren came to be in Straits, then they are brought to have a Sence of their Sin, and of that very sin they had for some years past been guilty of, and probably the Sence of it was now well near worn off; but when they come to see their own desperate Case (as they thought) in their Distress, then they remembered their sin against their Brother *Joseph*, Gen. 42. 21. *And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the Anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would*

would not bear ; therefore is this Distress come upon us ; and, my Brethren, God does so to this Day, he many times points out our sin, by the *End* of his Rod, and this he does graciously to teach us, wherefore he contends with us, and to beget and increase in us a hatred of that, and all other sins.

2. God has this gracious End in his Corrections, which is to quicken the Believer to his Duty, to make him more constant and more lively therein. We are prone, very prone, to be negligent of our Duty, or dull in the performance of it, to be remiss and careless therein, when things go with us according to our Carnal Appetites ; now God sees this, and therefore that he may herefrom us more frequently, and more fervently too, he sends the Rod to awaken us, and expects, as he says of *Israel*, Hosea 5. 15. *In their Affliction they will seek me early.* God may remove an Husband, from whose Care and Industry the Wife and all the Children subsisted, or he may take away a Child, an hopeful Plant, and this cuts deep upon the tender Father and Mother, but hereby they are, or shou'd be quicken'd to their Duty of calling on God, and walking with God in more Dependance on him, as the true Spring of all their Comfort and Consolation.

3. God by Correcting his Children, brings them into more Conformity to Christ Jesus, *Heb. 12. 10. But he for our Profit, that we*

might be made Partakers of his Holiness, Hereby they are made more like to Christ their Head and Husband, this is the End of God in chastening them, to bring them into more Conformity unto Christ, which is their true Honour and Excellency, and to make 'em meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. The true Believer is hereby humbled, brought to God's Foot, and made willing to be as God will have him, so the Psalmist says, *Psal. 119. 67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word.* This is that honourable Character this Man of God gave of divine Chastenings, he was brought hereby into his Way, from wandering and going astray in By-Paths, to his true Way, the Path of Holiness, to keep God's Word; and therefore let not the Sons and Daughters of Affliction have a hard Word, nor a hard Thought neither, of the Corrections of a gracious and good God; let them quietly stay the Issue, and they will find as *David* did, a fruit of Holiness thereby wrought in their own Souls. Hereby the Believer finds his Pride humbled, his soaring Thoughts and Desires abated, and himself at times brought into a considerable Conformity to Christ Jesus, *who was brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter; and as a Sheep is dumb before the Shearers, so opened he not his Mouth, Isa. 53. 7.*

4. The various Afflictions whereby God exercises his Children, are both to ripen them

them for Glory, and make them long to be there. God, as aforesaid, by *Afflictions* makes 'em meet to be *Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, Col. 1. 12. And the foregoing *Verse* tells us, that this is done by their *being strengthened with all might, according to his glorious Power, unto all Patience, and Long-Suffering with Joyfulness*; so that every wind and wave of Affliction wafts them nearer to their Port of Bliss; every renewed Tryal is to bring them nearer to Glory, nearer in their Preparations for it, and nearer in their Desires after it; they are now Heirs, however so poor and contemptible; but when they go hence, they go to their Father's House, and enter upon the Inheritance provided and prepared for them: The Believer often lives poor, poor in the World all his Days, but when he dies, he shall die *rich*; Death puts him in full Possession of his Inheritance, like an Heir come to a fit Age of Entrance upon his Estate, which was kept from him during his Minority, so the Believer at Death shall appear like himself, an Heir of that glorious Inheritance which Christ his Forerunner has taken Possession of in his Behalf, and secured for him: And how then should he long to be in Possession of that which Christ Jesus has purchased for him? willed to him, as in *John* 17. 24. and taken Possession of in his Behalf, and for his Use, as is expressed in *Heb.* 6. 20. *Whether the Fore-runner is for us entred, as if he were gone*

to Heaven on Purpose to prepare it, and secure it for them. And if we take Notice of that in *John* 17. Christ Jesus there dealing with his Father in Behalf of them whom he had given him, expresses himself as a Testator, like one about to die, who makes his Will, and bequeaths his Estate, and what he has, among his Children and Friends; and he Wills this to one, and that to another; so Christ, when about to die, he makes his Will, he dies no Beggar, that has nothing to give, but has a Kingdom, a glorious Kingdom, the glory of all Kingdoms, the glory of Heaven to bequeath and give to his Children, his Members, he will have 'em all near him, and happy with him, like a loving tender Husband who goes from his former Habitation to seek where he may live in more Plenty, and at Length he lights on, where he lives to his Mind, in Splendor and Fulness, What does he do in this Case? Well, 'tis below him to live in this Plenty and Fulness himself, and let his poor disconsolate Wife, and dear Children (whom he left under manifold Straits, and knows they must needs be so still) starve and pine for want of Necessaries; and therefore he sends for them all, as *Joseph* did for his Aged Father, that they may be near him, and with him, and share with him in all the Comfort he has; even thus does Christ, He will not have Heaven alone, and let his poor Members be left behind him, but he

wills Heaven and all the Glory thereof to them, and to be sure his *will* shall stand good, it shall never be disannulled, nor shall any Caveat be entered in that Court to set it aside, or in the left to incumber it. He in this passage does not express himself by way of Prayer to his Father in their behalf, to desire this Glory for them, as at other times he prays for them, but here it is, *Father I will*, &c. like a Testator that makes his Will, and gives this Glory to his Legatees, who shall have this his Will fully and punctually made good to them; and God, by Affliction raises his Children up to this Pitch, at times, to long to be with Christ their Head and Husband, that as he wills, *they may be with him, where he is, to behold his Glory.*

5. God Chastens his Children by removing their Injoyments from them, (which is one way of his Correcting 'em) to let them see the Frailty and Falability of all sublunary Comforts, whether Persons or Things; he does thus as to Things, Worldly Riches, to let us see their uncertainty, and that as *Solomon* in his Expostulation with the worldly Man tells him, *Prov. 23. 5. that they certainly make themselves Wings, and flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven.* This is in the Nature of them, to be unsteady and unconstant, and therefore says he, *they make themselves Wings, they need none to make 'em for them, for it is their property to flee away, not to hop from one to another, with a lea-*
surely

surely Motion, but flee, and flee away, and flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven, which is highest and farthest of all of any other Bird; all to Note the swiftness of their Motion from us; and therefore says he, *wilt thou set thine Eyes upon that which is not?* to Note to us that while Worldy Men are setting their Eyes and their Hearts too, upon their Riches, while they are looking at them, and thinking what a brave Estate their wise Management, and prudent Conduct has gotten 'em, their Wealth shrinks from them, dwindles away, and melts between their Fingers, while they are looking at, and thinking of it, *it is not*, at best, is not what they took it to be; there is not that true, solid satisfaction in it they thought on. And then as to Persons, God does this frequently, he removes a Relation, a tender Husband, a beloved Wife, or it may be one Child, then another, till all be gone; he sends Death as a Messenger or Pursivant to arrest one and another dear Relation, and hereby convince us how frail, how fickle and uncertain are these our Comforts, and that our Affections may be weaned from them, and set upon more lasting, everlasting Objects. The Psalmist in this Ps. *v. 4, 5, 6.* and in *v. 11.* reassumes the same Subject, which is to shew the Breavity and Uncertainty of humane Life, on which Verses I have more fully insisted in the beginning of this Discourse, and to which I refer the candid Reader.

der. God, by the Fickleness of our State; would wean us from our fond Affection to dying Friends and Relations, and by their Removal, would convince us how frail both we and they are, with all other sublunary Comforts and Enjoyments.

3. I come now in the *Third Place*, to shew why it is the Duty of a Christian, quietly to submit to God in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards us.

1. Because all we have, or ever had, flows from the Bounty of a Sovereign Lord, who has a Right to take them at his Pleasure; this was that which quieted good *Job* under all the Losses he sustained, *the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* God takes one Friend, one Relation after another from you, and you are apt to take on sore for this, but pray who gave you that Relation, that Son, that Daughter that you are so much concerned for your Loss of? did not the Lord give you that same before he took him or her from you? and if he gave at his own Pleasure, why may he not take according to his own Will, but you must matter and murmur thereat?

2. Consider, That our Comforts do not only flow from God, but he has actually done that very Thing which we account the Matter of our grievous Affliction. God is the wise Governour of all secondary Causes to his own holy Ends and Purposes. We may

may probably, upon the Death of a Relation, blame this or the other mismanagement of such as inspected such an one our Friend in the Time of his Sicknes, and it may be there may be too much Room for such a Charge, and the thing we are uneasy about, may too truly be imputed as an Act of Negligence, and an over-sight, not to be accounted for, and this aggravates our Trouble, and cuts us the deeper under these just Apprehensions of such Negligence; but tho' this does no way acquit the Person at whose Door this Charge lies, nor excuse his Negligence, yet we are to consider, that the Wisdom of God over-rules all the Impertinencies and Follies of Men, to bring about his own Purpose, he makes use of these secondary Causes to accomplish what his Sovereign Pleasure is in this Matter, and therefore we are to have a special Regard to this which the Psalmist expresses to be that which quieted him in the like Case, in the Words of the Text, *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it.* Which may respect either,

1. That God over-rules all secondary Causes to his own purpose, and so he be said to have done it. or else,

2. That the Matter was now brought to a perfect and compleat Issue, it was fully accomplished and done, *thou didst it*, has gone through to perfect that thing, that it is not now to be recalled or retrieved; on both these

these Accounts it might be Prudence for *David*, and so for us, to acquiesce in the good Pleasure of God in what he has done, in as much as *he has done it, it*, that very thing we are so concern'd about; what ever just Cause we may have to reflect on one or another, as Instruments, yet the Wisdom and Power of God has brought that Matter, that very Thing, *it*, to such an Issue as we find, which may tend to quiet us under our present Sorrows and Uneasiness.

3. Consider, as a Reason to quiet your Minds, that God is not only just, but gracious in the present proceedings of his Providence towards you, the Stroke might have been much more severe than it is, God has taken from you such a Relation as you loved, and from whom you probably had great Expectation; but yet he has left you something, yea many Things to bless him for, and he knows how to make up the Loss you have in one Relation, by the Comfort of another, or can make it up some other way, and if he spare you with those Things he sees meet for your Comfortable Subsistence, you have Reason to acquiesce in his Will, as knowing every good thing you have is of Mercy and Grace, and ought so to be acknowledged. *Jacob*, you know was in great Distress for his Son *Joseph*, and indeed so much concerned for him, and the detaining of his Son *Simeon*, and the surprizing and unwelcome News, his other Sons brought him from *Egypt*,

Egypt, that his beloved *Benjamin* must go also to clear the suspicion of Fraud that they lay under, or else they must all starve for want of Bread, that he overlooks what he had left in the rest of his Progeny, his *Reuben*, his *Gad* and *Asher*, &c. are not minded, which was his failing, and like enough it may be ours. Now we are to notice what God has left us, as well as what he has taken, in as much as he does not let out all his Wrath, but as in *Isa. 27. 8. Stays his rough Wind in the Day of his East Wind.* God has taken away some of our Comforts, but yet he has left us many more to bless him for, or it may be makes up the loss we have in one Relation, by giving in another, as in the Case of *Isaac*, who was comforted in his *Rebekah*, after his Mothers Death, *Gen. 34. 67.* And if he break not in upon all our Comforts, but spare us with many Mercies, the least of which is above our Deserts, the Consideration hereof well improved, might engage us to a humble and thankful Acknowledgment of his sparing Goodness in what is left.

4. Consider that the Loss you sustain by the Removal of your deceased Relation (for I intend to run the rest of the Discourse that way, as at first promised) may be their Gain, and if they are safe arriv'd at their Port of Happiness, you may assure yourselves they would not be put back again to be tost on the Waves of a Troublesome World,

World, as you and I are. Those blessed Souls who once arrive safe at their desired Port, never entertain any Thoughts of coming back again into a vexatious, tempestuous and frowning World of Sorrows ; they find more agreeable Company in the blessed Regions above, among glorified Saints and holy Angels, their intimate Companions, then once to retain any Thoughts of sliding down back again into this terrestrial Globe, into such sordid Company as they know the most part of this lower World affords. And this Consideration may be a Means to engage us to acquiesce in the good Pleasure of God, in this his taking from us such Relations as we are afflicted about, in as much as if we have any good Hopes of their arrival at their Port of Glory, our Loss may be their Gain.

There might be divers other Reasons assigned for this our Submission, as, that God enjoyns it, and expects our ready Compliance with his Sovereign Will ; and because still herein he deals with us according to our present State, which is a dying State, and it is the common Lot of the nearest and dearest Friends and Relations to be thereby separated one from another, and so is but what we could expect in the common way of Providence ; but I shall forbear to say any thing further under this General Head, and come to the Use and Application of the Doctrine

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laid down in some Inferences therefrom, as follows.

First Inference.] If it be so, that it is the Duty of a Christian quietly to submit to God in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards him, then we may justly infer from hence, how unbecoming it is for us to act contrary hereto, and instead of acquiescing in the good Pleasure of a gracious God, we take up our Complaints against him in the way of his Correcting Providence, or if it amount not to this, yet we are forward and impatient under such his Dealings, which implies it; this is far from the Psalmist's quiet Temper, *who was dumb, and opened not his Mouth, because the Lord had done it.* And there is nothing in which we think our selves more aggrieved, than in the Removal of some near and dear Relation, which God has strip'd us of, when he takes away from a tender Father, or indulgent Mother, a beloved Child, one they had great Hopes on of being the Comfort of their declining Years, such a stroke is too frequently born with great Impatience: Now that we may see how unbecoming this is in the Christian, let us consider these few Particulars.

1. Hereby he discovers his over-fondness of that Relation which God has snatch'd from him, and he so hardly parts with. Thus it was with *David*, in the Case of *Ab-salom*. Oh, with what Vehemence does he bewail his Fall! 2 Sam. 18. 33. *And the King*

King was much moved, and went up to the Chamber over the Gate, and wept, and as he went, thus he said, O my Son Absolom, my Son, my Son Absolom, would God I had died for thee, O Absolom, my Son, my Son. How pathetically does he here bewail the Death of his Son *Absolom*, who was slain in his Rebellion against his Father, which shewed his overfondness of him; and of this his General *Joab* takes Notice, and deals roundly with him about it in the following Chapter.

2. We may also consider, how ineffectual all such Impatience and Immoderate Sorrow is. *David* you know was much concern'd for the young Child born to him by *Bathsheba*, so long as it lived, he fasted and prayed on that Account so long as there was any Room for those Duties; but when he knew the Child was dead, he then saw how ineffectual all his further Sorrow would be, and therefore he quite alter'd his Behaviour, 2 Sam. 12. 18, 19, 20. *He arose and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his Apparel, and came into the House of the Lord and Worshiped.* He knew that all immoderate Sorrow would be to no Purpose, and therefore he prudently refrains from it, and was in a much better Frame, then in the Case of *Absolom* aforementioned. Now if we could seriously consider to what little Purpose it is to shew so much Impatience under God's Hand as we do, when our deceased Friend or Relation is gone to the Dust, and we

can by no Means recall him, it might Help us against such immoderate Sorrow, as we find prevails upon us under such a Circumstance.

3. Consider, that the immoderate Sorrow you have on this Account, may be a great Detriment to your selves; you may thereby lay a Foundation for a Distemper on your own Persons, which may break your present good Constitution of Health, and either hastily or more leasurely, with a lingring Disease, send you to the Grave; for as we read, *2 Cor. 7. 10. The sorrow of this World (of which this is one Sort) worketh Death.*

Second Inference.] If it be so, &c. then we may hence Inferred, That it is our great Duty to comply herewith, quietly to submit to, and acquiesce in the Will of God, in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards us; and because of the perverseness of our Natures, and the unweildiness of our Minds to come up to this necessary Duty, I shall say something by way of Motive, to engage us more strenuously, and in good earnest to attend unto the Practice thereof.

First Motive.] Consider that God never gave you any thing here, with Security that he would never call for it from you, if he have given you Children, or other Relations which are dear to you; Has he given you Security therewith, that he would never call for 'em at your Hands? Where have you

you any such Assurance from him? And if he have given you no such Security, you cannot charge him with Breach of Promise. My Brethren, pray remember this, that whatever God gives you, he always reserves his own Title therein to call for it when he pleases. This is fully and clearly exemplified in that noted Text, *Hos. 2. 8, 9.* where God has given *Israel* Corn, Wine, Oyl, Silver, Gold, Wool and Flax, a confluence of excellent Things, a magazine of Stores, but yet he had not so given them, but he retains a just and full Property in them still, and therefore we find that he calls 'em all *his*, *his Corn, his Wine, his Wool and his Flax.* And God lays the same Claim to, and retains his Title in all he gives to any of the Sons of Men to this Day, all the Blessings we have of any Kind in this World, and so our Children, our Friends and Relations which he has given us, they are all *his*, he has a just Property in them, and may demand them at Pleasure; we have no other Tenure of them, but *durante bene placito*, during his good Pleasure, and this may oblige us to this Submission to his Will, in as much as we hold all at Uncertainties, and have no Security of a fixed stay of any Thing we enjoy from God who gave it, and has a true Right to call for it at our Hands when he pleases; and this brings me orderly to the second Motive.

2. Consider, that God as a Sovereign Lord, has a Right of Dominion over us and

ours ; he may, and does act according to the counsel of his own Will, nor is it meet for us to say unto him, what doest thou ? This was it which quieted the Psalmist in the Text, *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it* ; he who had a Right to do it, had done it. *David* had a special Regard to God, as a Sovereign Agent, and thus should we do ; he who takes from us a dear Relation, he has a Right to do it, and may justly do it, as he is Lord of all.

3. Consider, that the great Matter of a Believer's Comfort, does not consist in the nearest and best Relations among Men ; it is true, Children are desirable Company, when towardly, and they gain upon our Affections when they are so ; and so likewise other Relations when suitable to us, are thereby render'd amiable, and we have cause to bless God for them ; but yet, Christ and the Promises, the Comforts of the Holy Spirit, the Peace and Joy that flows in thereby to the Soul, give a more sprightly and abiding Joy than the best of Relations among Men do, or can do ; and we often find that our Comforts in the best Relation, are clogg'd with some uneasiness, which the Wisdom of God has intermix'd therewith, on purpose to wean our overfond Affections from them, and place them on better Objects ; whereas the Comforts of the good Spirit of Grace, the Peace and Consolation which flow from Christ and the

the Promises, are without alay. There is no Sorrow arises from them; nor is the Soul that has fullest and most constant Enjoyment thereof, ever cloy'd therewith, but always coveting after more.

4. You know not but what Relation God has strip'd you of, might have proved contrary to what your Expectations were there from. We are apt to promise our selves a great deal of Happiness from sprightly Children; we have big Hopes concerning them, when their Capacity out-strips their Years, and they are riper then commonly their Age allows. When such Capacity is accompanied with Diligence in what they manage for us, we have high Thoughts of them, and this heightens our Esteem of them; but if God had continued such a forward promising Youth, as he has taken from us, Are we sure he would not have baulk'd our Expectations? Have we not seen many a fair Morning, conclude in a foul Evening? And cannot we in our own Observance see many indulgent Parents sadly disappointed in their once promising Sons and Daughters, who instead of being a Comfort to them, are the grief of their Hearts, and bring down their Hoary Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave? You are not sure what you might have met with of this Kind, from your deceas'd Child or Children; and if God in his Wisdom and Goodness to you, have prevented your after Sorrow by them, you ought not to be so uneasy

uneasy under your present Circumstance, in as much as you know not how the Issue might have been, if you might have had your own Will concerning them indulged.

Fifth Motive.] Consider, that whatever Relations are gone, yet God the best Relation, and Christ the best Friend, and the Holy Spirit, the best Comforter of a Believer, stays still, and will ever abide so. The Relation that is betwixt Christ and the Believer, shall never be broken, no Dissolution shall ever be made in this Relation. The Husband dies, and leaves the Wife; the Wife dies, and leaves the Husband; Parents die, and leave their Children; Children die, and leave their Parents; and the most intimate and endeared Friends die, and leave one another, and so they do, and must all do, one after another; and then the nearest and closest Ties of Relation and Friendship are broken to Pieces; but the Relation that Christ stands in to the Believer holds, and holds for ever, *He is an everlasting Father*, Isa. 9. 6. and so he is everlasting in all other Relations that he stands in to the Believer. The closest knit Relations among Men are very changeable, they are uncertain in their own Nature, but God is an unchangeable God, *Mal. 3. 6. For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed*; and as he is unchangeable in his own Nature, so also he is unchangeable in all the Relations that he stands in to his People. Christ
Jesus

Jesus is pleased to take his Church, and every Member thereof into many Relations: He is Father, Husband, Brother, and all else, and ever will be, that endeared Love and yearning Bowels can oblige him to: It cannot be so among Men, no Man on Earth can be Father, Husband and Brother, but Christ is all this to his Members, and all to express his Love; for one Relation is not enough to declare it, and therefore he stands in all we can wish him to be, or has need of him, and so we find him expressing himself with all the Love and Affection we are able to conceive of, *Cant. 4. 9. Thou hast ravished my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse.* And again, *v. 10.* and again, *v. 12.* and again, *Chap. 5. 1. 10.* So that he is both Brother and Husband to her, and so he ever will be; for now that he is in Glory, the Relation still holds, for the Father gave the Church to Christ to be his Spouse, it was he that made the Match, and tho' Christ be now exalted in Glory, and his poor Spouse be fallen to Decay, be poor and needy, yet he owns her for his still, and ever will do, for he is ashamed to relinquish her now in her Extremity, but loves her, notwithstanding her low Estate, and will never leave loving her, till he love her up to Glory, *That where he is, there she may be also, John 17. 24.* And if the Relation betwixt Christ and the Believer shall not be broken, but ever hold, then this may sufficiently make up all the

Loss

Loss he has by the removal of the best and most endeared Relation, which God in his Providence has taken from him.

All I shall say further, shall be to conclude this Discourse in a short Use of Direction, to help us to come up to this our Duty of Submission to God, in all the Dispensations of his Providence towards us : And is as followeth.

1. Have frequent Recourse to those Providences and Promises which God has given you at other Times, to help and comfort you in your present Extremities. Call to mind what God has done for you in other Straits. This is a good Antidote to prevent our Quarrelling with the present Difficulties we are under. *David* remembred what God had done for him afore-time, to encourage himself against new Difficulties, *Psal.* 42. 6. *O my God, my Soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the Land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Mizar ; and so also he consider'd what God had done for him when he deliver'd him from the Lyon and the Bear, and this helped his Faith, and gave him Courage and Boldness to encounter the Great Goliath.* So do you call to Mind what God has done for you in former Straits ; remember how seasonably he came in with a Word of Consolation to your Souls, when you were under such a dark Circumstance as your selves can Instance in, and see what you can do to keep Faith

Faith in its lively Exercise on those former great and precious Promises which God has given you, and you have seen and felt them to be his Gift by the Power and Authority which came along with them into your Souls. If you have an approved Remedy, a rich Cordial, which you have found to answer your Case, in former Occasions, you will no doubt but have Recourse to it again, for the same good Purpose, with Expectation; and so do in this Case, remember God's former Loving Kindness, how seasonably and suitably he reliev'd you, when your Faith ran low, and you were ready to give up all your Hopes, and yet even then he came into your Help, and delivered you from all your Fears. You have, no doubt, often read that great and good Word, *Rom. 8. 28. And we know all Things work together for Good, to them that Love God*: And if all Things, then this very Loss of yours, in so dear a Relation as you have parted with, shall be tutor'd by Divine Wisdom and Goodness to Work for your Good, tho' at present you see it not.

2. As to the Promises, so also have Recourse to the Attributes of God; the Goodness, Wisdom, Faithfulness and Power of God afford us great matter of Support under all our melancholly Circumstances, and have a powerful Effect on the Soul to engage it to acquiesce in the good Pleasure of that God whose Goodness sets all his other Attributes at Work to befriend his Children
under

under all their Distresses. And it is a comfortable Thing, that the Believer has an Interest in all these, and may flee to this Munition of Rocks to secure himself from the Assaults of the Devil and all his Instruments. O what a precious Priviledge, and blessed Security is it to the poor Believer, that when he is persued by the Devil and his Angels, he has the Attributes of God to have Recourse to, where he is safe; like as a little Bird who is pursued by some ravenous Bird of Prey, hastes to the Bush, and hops from Twig to Twig to secure it self from the Talents of its Enemy; so, the Believer may flee from Attribute to Attribute, which are the Munition of Rocks to defend him from all the Attempts of Satan who would devour him; and that God has made such glorious Provision for his Children, by intitling them in all his Attributes, is not only great Security to them, but may engage them to acquiesce in all the Dispensations of his Providence.

3. Call to mind your former Experience of God's governing dark Providences to a happy Issue. You little thought such a dismal black Cloud as you have already been under, should have concluded so happily as it did; and what know you but this you are now under, may have a better Issue then you can at present hope for? There is an after-ward Fruit of Affliction.

4. Do

4. Do not indulge your present Tumour, and the undue Risings of your Hearts, against the Proceedings of God in his Providence now afflicting, but watch carefully against it; this was *David's* Practice, he was afraid lest any Act of Impatience shou'd be found with him in his Trouble, and therefore he resolved to watch his Heart, and guard his Tongue, and thus shou'd we do, if we wou'd arrive at this great Duty.

5. Let not your Thoughts too frequently dwell on what was amiable in your deceas'd Relation; the frequent Remembrance of this makes it harder to part with such an one without Reluctancy, probably, as there was something amiable in such an one, so also, as probably there was something in him, not so acceptable to you, and therefore set the one against the other, to correct your over-value for him, and this may help you with more Readiness to comply with the Will of your heavenly Father, in your present Case.

Lastly, Have frequent Recourse to God by Prayer, that he would help you to a Compliance with his Holy Will, in this his afflicting Providence. God has set up a Throne of Grace for this very Purpose, that we may go thither on all Occasions to obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in time of Need, and if you think it such a

Time with you, surely then you should go thither, to find Grace suitable to help you in such a Time, you can never bring your Hearts to a Compliance with the Will of God in his chastening Providence of any Kind, without special Grace from him for that Purpose; and therefore have frequent Recourse to the God of Grace, that he would help you to act as the Psalmist in the Text, *Who was dumb and opened not his Mouth, because the Lord had done it.*

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